

dailypress.com/business/dp-biz_youngbusiness_0123jan23,0,7925555.story

dailypress.com

Young entrepreneurs look to succeed

Help is available for those starting a business to navigate the hard realities of making it work.

By JENNY NEFF SPECIAL TO THE DAILY PRESS

January 23, 2009

By the time Amanda Wilbourne was 18, she had two years experience in the retail industry and was working her way toward a co-manager position at a nationally recognized boutique. At 20 she started her own business, The Nautical Dog, a pet boutique located in Mattaponi, 30 miles outside of Williamsburg.

In September, Wilbourne, 22, moved The Nautical Dog to a 1,200 square foot location in Williamsburg.

While working toward a business administration degree at Old Dominion University in 2003, Jonathan Register started a local painting branch under Tuition Painting and was named one of the top 10 in the company.

In May of 2006, Register interned with CB Richard Ellis, a local commercial real estate brokerage company. Register graduated during the winter of 2006 and began working full time for CB Richard Ellis. In October, Register, 24, opened Arf! Pet Care, an in-home pet service, with his wife, Jennifer.

Starting a small business is no easy feat when you're in your early 20s. However, with a background in business and the right resources, starting a small business isn't out of the question, even in a floundering economy.

But anyone starting a business should be ready for hard work and harsh realities.

"A lot of people think creating a small business is a quick fix," said Mike Kuhns, vice chairman and counselor at the Peninsula chapter of SCORE, a nonprofit company aiding small businesses around the nation. Success is anything but guaranteed. According to SCORE, within the first two years, a third of new small businesses go under, and 44 percent make it to the four-year mark.

The Peninsula chapter, located in the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce office in Hampton, counseled about 700 people last year. For every 100 who attended sessions, 25-30 people return after the first meeting.

Kuhns said that most people do not realize that they need a business plan, business bank accounts, a lawyer and an accountant.



University of Phoenix
Thinking ahead.

ONLINE PROGRAMS

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREES
Associate of Arts in Business
Associate of Arts in Health Care Administration
Associate of Arts in Information Technology

BACHELOR'S DEGREES
Bachelor of Science in Business / Management
Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration
Bachelor of Science in Management

MASTER'S DEGREES
Master of Arts in Education / Curriculum and Instruction
Master of Business Administration
Master of Information Systems

Register almost postponed the opening of Arf! Pet Care because of the economy. He extended a holiday discount by several weeks to help his business attract new customers.

John Bucelato, Peninsula chapter chairman and counselor at SCORE, said potential owners have to be dedicated and have some experience in the field in order to run a successful business.

Wilbourne worked four years in retail before opening her store and knows the importance of experience.

"If I were to open a restaurant, I'd have no idea what to do because I've never worked at a restaurant. I think that's why a lot of stores are not successful," Wilbourne said.

Register and his wife started Arf! Pet Care out of frustration and need.

"Whenever we left for trips it was hard finding someone to watch our dog, Mackenzie. We started ARF! to fill the void and provide reliable service," said Register.

Bucelato also stressed that young entrepreneurs should take advantage of the Internet, library and small business starters, like SCORE.

"We offer free one-on-one and online counseling. There are a lot of resources, but it comes down to you," said Bucelato.

Register visited the Small Business Development Center of Hampton Roads (SBDC) in search of references for accountants and an attorney. He also got help from his family and from online research. Wilbourne's family also became a vital source for her business. Several members of her family also own businesses.

Wilbourne said commitment is one of the most important ingredients for success in a small business.

"My main focus is the store. This is it for me, this is my 110 percent," she said. "Everything I do goes toward the store."

To learn more

For more information about SCORE please visit www.peninsulaescore.com

For more information about ARF! Pet Care, call Jonathan Register at 301-4747.

For more information about The Nautical Dog, call Amanda Wilbourne at 220-2001.

Copyright © 2009, [Newport News, Va., Daily Press](#)